IMMIGRANT WOMEN IN THE LABOUR FORCE

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The attached reports are the result of a research project, funded under a Local Initiatives Project grant, which documented and made recommendations in regard to the specific needs of immigrant women.

The project ceased to exist officially as of June 30, 1974. The reports have been forwarded to the appropriate departments of government.

We now commend the reports to you for study and action.

Vancouver Status of Women
Social Concerns Committee,
Vancouver YWCA.

(This paper was re-printed with the financial assistance of the Department of Secretary of State, Women's Programme.)

IMMIGRANT WOMEN IN THE LABOUR FORCE

Our project, "Immigrant Women in the Labour Force", has been researching the specific problems of immigrant women in the Greater Vancouver work force. The project was initiated in January, 1974, under the co-sponsorship of the Vancouver Status of Women and the Social Concerns Committee of the YWCA and was funded under a Local Initiatives Project grant. Our sponsoring groups initiated this project because they had faced many problems for immigrant working women and wanted to research and document these problems.

Attached are the reports which contain the results of our research and our recommendations about specific needs of the immigrant women. They have been presented firstly to the persons and institutions to whom they are addressed. As soon as they have been read, we hope to hear from you so that we can arrange for a meeting to discuss them.

We hope at the end of a months time to make copies of all the reports available to the public.

We concentrated our research in the Chinese, Portuguese and Italian communities, and received corroborative information from the East Indian and Greek communities. This project prepared a questionnaire with which we could approach women in these communities. However, as the project progressed, we realized that personal contact was a much more realistic way in which to obtain information. In many cases the worker from this project established an ongoing relationship as friend, counsellor and interpreter with a woman, and saw the woman often throughout the six month period.

We also researched the agencies and services with which these women have had contact. We looked into the policy of the Unemployment Insurance Commission and Canada Manpower. We reviewed and assessed the services available through the Immigrant Services Society, language training programs (Vancouver City College Special Programs Division) vocational training programs, employment services, unions which have jurisdiction in the women's work areas, legal community services, interpreter services child care facilities, public health care facilities (with special emphasis on mental health care) and community school facilities.

The very nature of the information which we were looking for, and the people we spoke to make it very difficult to accurately reflect our results in statistics. It must be understood that the women we came to know were very hesitant to provide information in any official documented form. This hesitancy is based to a large degree, on a real fear about loss of one's job if any complaints are made, as well as fear of people recording information for any governmental agency, and a general resistance to any intrusion of an alien culture into family and personal privacy. Our information came therefore through conversation, which over the time grew more intimate. Where women would, in their native tongue, tell our worker about their problems, they would not agree to have this information recorded anywhere, even on the confidential questionnaire. It became apparent, through such conversation, that for every woman we were able to contact, there were tens of others, with whom she worked, who were in the same position. We came to realize, and are now convinced, that information obtained in these informal ways (when compared to usual governmental standards) is just as valid and legitimate, if not more so than standard statistical data. It became our desire therefore, not to push our information into computerized data, but to attempt, in our own reports, to be true in style, to the nature of information flow in the communities in which we worked. We realize, however, that we must provide you with some idea about the number of people we saw, and their general biographical histories. The following therefore, are very rough figures, which deal with major background situations. By looking at the areas in which the largest number of women who answered any one question fell, one can get a picture of the average situation we encountered.

Number of women interviewed.... 186

Marital status: Married - 148
Single - 19
Widowed - 8
Separated - 5
Divorced - 0

Family size: one child - 33
two to four children - 80
five or more children - 9

Child car facilities used:
Day care centre - 5
Babysitter - 8
Other family member - 48
Children stay home alone, or
go to school are are alone afterwards - 30
Children go to work with mother - 4

Average month income of family: (the statistics which follow were reported in the Chinese and Italian communities. There was some resistance to this question in the Portuguese community, however, our workers estimate that the average monthly income was $500.00 - $750.00 per month. The figure is higher in this community because most of the men hold down two jobs).

Under $300.00 - 6
$300 - $500 - 28
$500 - $750 - 17
$750 - $1,000 - 12
over $1,000 - 5

Number supporting other dependents, abroad or in Canada - 94
Number who belong to a union - 29
Number who make anything above minimum wage - 53 (most fall within a dime of minimum wage).
Number who "in their own opinion speak enough English" - 37

A picture therefore emerges of a married woman with two, three or four children, the children are taken care of by other family members, usually grandparents, or stay alone after school. The Chinese and Italian family live on $300.00 - $500.00 a month, and the Portuguese family on $500.00 - $750.00 a month, and is supporting other dependents in Canada and abroad. The woman works for minimum wage, does not belong to a union, and is not satisfied with her English language ability.

It is important to note that there is a high correlation between women who do make above minimum wage, and union membership, and/or language competence.

The majority of women we saw work in the Garment Industry as power sewers or folders. The next major occupational group was the Cleaning Industry, with employment as chambermaids or janitorial workers, cleaning offices or other business establishments after hours. A number of women also worked in the Food Services Industry, predominantly as dishwashers, then cafeteria workers and to a lesser degree waitresses in ethnic restaurants. We also spoke to women in the packing and canning industry, mainly fish plants, poultry plants and vegetable plants. There were a few women who worked as laundresses.

The data we collected is not unique. It is corroborated by information recorded by the YWCA in a national report on the general position of immigrant women in Canada. The situation faced by immigrant workers, especially in the garment industry, was experienced first hand and recorded by Sheila Arnopouos in a series of articles for the Montreal Star. While Ms. Arnopoulos did her research in Quebec, her results are very similar.

Based on our own research (for which documentation is available) and this corroborative research, we have prepared a number of reports. These reports are aimed at being constructive, as opposed to mainly documentative because our research, which repeatedly points out the same problems, demands immediate and swift action.

Because of the nature of different governmental jurisdictions, (from federal to provincial and department to department) we divided our recommendations into reports for various departments. However, it is our conviction that immigrant working women face an integrated set of problems, which extend from the community, through the work place and the home. We have therefore provided you with a set of all reports prepared, because, all of these reports together provide a more complete picture of the present situation of immigrant women in the labour force. As it is suggested in a number of places throughout the reports, as the problems are so interwoven the solution must be a joint enterprise and must be approached in an integrated way.

Because this project was research oriented, and LIP funded, it ceased to exist officially as of June 30th. However, those of us who have worked on and around the project, and representatives from our sponsoring groups have established an ongoing committee which will now direct itself towards implementation of our recommendations. You will therefore, be hearing from us again shortly for your response to our reports.

It was with the utmost seriousness and commitment to improvement that this project was begun, carried through and now continued in a different form. We trust that you who have the power to make the necessary changes, will give this situation your serious commitment as well.

All correspondence should be directed to Elizabeth Fortes at 580 Burrard Street, Vancouver, B.C. V6C 2K9.

RC/mm
July 1974.

IMMIGRANT WOMEN IN THE LABOUR FORCE

REPORT TO:

The Honourable Eileen Dailly
Minister of Education

IMMIGRANT WOMEN IN THE LABOUR FORCE

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Minister of Education

INTRODUCTION

This project, "Immigrant Women in the Labour Force" recorded a number of problems for immigrant working women which come under the jurisdiction of your department. These problems generally fall into two major categories: language training and vocational training.

1. LANGUAGE TRAINING

At present it is very difficult for an immigrant working women to attend free English classes. Given the time scheduling, the location, the cost, the availability of child care and Manpower criteria for sponsorship of the English classes under the sole or joint auspices of your Department, immigrant women are effectively excluded from almost all present courses.

While this project applaudes the recent increase in funds given to Vancouver Community College, Special Programs Division to reduce the fees for language training classes, the move is not sufficient. One program, under joint auspices of your Department, "Mother and Tots" provides a very good, local service for women at home during the day, but is useless for women who work a normal working day, as all classes are held between 9:30 am and 3:00 pm. There does exist an evening program at the King Edward Campus of Vancouver Community College, but this course meets daily from 6:30 to 9:30 pm, and does not provide babysitting. For a woman working forty hours a week and, usually taking care of a family as well, such a course is far too exhausting, and the learning efficiency due to this exhaustion, is very low. The "Improve Your Pronounciation" course, as well as English 099, while providing a worthwhile service for some immigrants, are well beyond the starting point of many immigrant women, who are illiterate in their first language, let alone English. All but one class (for Chinese) of the "Canadian Life and Language" and "Canadiana" Programs are scheduled during the day, and are again of no use to the woman working regular business hours. The only other language training program under the auspices of your Department is the night school program. The most recent term enrollment (over 600) shows the need for evening classes. However, only two might school centres

are in the east end of Greater Vancouver, with nothing north of Broadway, nor east of Fraser. For many women in ethnic communities, this means a long trip at night on slow and inadequate public transit. Once again, baby sitting is not provided for these courses, so if both a husband and wife need language training one must stay home with the family. It is needless to point out that the wife is usually the one who does stay home. There is only one Saturday morning class, which is situated in downtown Vancouver. While such a class could be of utmost interest to the working woman, no babysitting is provided.

This inaccessability of language training for a working woman is compounded by the fact that these women often work in a place where friends or relatives work, that is, where she can communicate in her own language. She therefore does not learn much English on the job. There are cases of cleaning ladies, who call home every time the employer gives them a new instruction. The employer repeats the instruction to a teenage child at home, who then translates it into the first language for the women. It is obvious how this language barrier keeps women trapped in low paying jobs, and jobs as this project has documented, with a high potential for exploitation.

However, the acute problems created because of lack of language skill does not end here. This project came in contact with many women who could not handle basic emergency procedure. They did not know how to contact a doctor, an ambulance, the police or the fire department. Workers from this project were called in the middle of the night to assist in such cases. The urgency of this problem is of grave concern to this project.

There is another set of problems which fall fall under the jurisdiction of your Department, which comes as a result of lack of language, and we might add, cultural orientation. As we have tried to point out, because of the scheduling of language classes and the priority given by Canada Manpower, as well as individual families, for the chief breadwinner to learn English, women are the last member of their families to learn the language. Because of this, they often become estranged from their school aged children, who are learning English and being, to a greater or lesser degree, acculturated into the Canadian society at school. The woman is unable to communicate with the teacher,

principal or nurse at the school and cannot understand her child's learning progress. Marks and comments are provided in English, and become a source of anxiety and conflict in many immigrant families. This lack of communication between the family and the school often creates problems for the child above and beyond the general problems of intergrating into a new society. These problems quickly become the problems of the teacher, and the school and therefore, of your Department.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Your Department must immediately undertake a community educational program in regard to emergency procedure. This project believes that your Department should introduce legislation which allows for the establishment of a central emergency number in the province. The number 999 has been used in other parts of the country for this purpose, and puts one in touch with ambulance, fire and police help. Until such a number can be established, the Telephone Company must accept responsibility through 'Operator' for such calls from people who have not mastered all emergency telephone numbers. Education about three basic numbers, ambulance, fire and police must be begun on ethnic radio programs, in the ethnic presses, in many work places, on the buses etc. Your Department should make available, stickers, which can be attached to the phone, which give these important numbers. Such stickers must be produced in a number of languages.

2. There must be a concerted effort to provide evening and Saturday morning classes, free of charge, with free babysitting provided, in the local elementary schools and community centres, specifically designed for women. These classes should be constructed in a unit fashion with each class being one complete unit, so that, if a women must miss one or two classes she will not be afraid to return to the course.

3. Your Department must investigate, and wherever possible, continue the language training programs begun by the LIP funded Community Education Project. These classes have attempted to establish small language class groups in the home or local community centre atmosphere. The classes are composed of women speaking the same native language, so that training can be from one language into English. This greatly hightens the learning efficiency in these classes.

Groups of women, particularly in the Portuguese community, have expressed great pleasure with these classes, which are providing a cultural and social base, as well as language training.

4. Along with Canada Manpower, your Department must encourage pilot projects, of language classes given at the place of work. This project has recommended to Canada Manpower that they provide incentives for employers to establish such a program.

5. Because every program established outside the home will provide some difficulty for working women with families your Department must begin to make use of ethnic radio programs, and community T.V. to provide language classes which can be received in the home, local church or community group. Tapes should be produced by your Department which can be put to use in these areas.

6. In relation to the problems for the immigrant women around her children's education, we recommend that the school be responsible for contacting the family of each new Canadian student to discuss the program into which the child will be placed. This proposal quickly raises the question of personnel attached to the school who speak the major languages of the area, and who are part of the cultural community. Bayview Community School has made an effort to begin this communication by publishing a newsletter in English and Greek (the other major language in the neighbourhood), providing Greek cultural programs, and having people fluent in Greek and English available for communication link. The YWCA has also sponsored a similar project in the Sunset area of Vancouver with the East Indian community. Your Department must accept responsibility, throughout the province of having a community worker, recruited from the ethnic community attached to every school in which there is a high proportion of non-English speaking families. Your Department must also establish policy stating that such schools, in establishing programs must take into special account the particular cultural values, customs and procedures of the community which they serve; and make facilities available for community training programs geared to the specific needs of ethnic families.

2. VOCATIONAL TRAINING

Partly because of the language barrier, as well as the low level of

education which many women are afforded in their country of origin, immigrant women in B.C. have a very limited occupation choice. At present most immigrant women are restricted to work in the:

Garment Industry.....as power sewers or folders
Food Services.....as dishwashers, cafeteria and catering service workers, and in some cases waitresses (usually in ethnic restaurants).
Cleaning Industry....as chambermaids and after hours office cleaners.

and to a lesser degree, packing and canning, and in the summer, farmworkers.

While this project in no way means to imply that these are unimportant jobs, they do all have the quality of being jobs which are hidden away from the public eye. As suggested to the Department of Labour, this allows for a high occurence of exploitation and discrimination. It also in no way encourages or facilitates the cultural exchanges which lies at the basis of Canadian society.

It has also come to the attention of this project that your Department has begun a revamping of vocational training, with new emphasis on academic training to the exclusion of vocational training. This project views with some concern the changing emphasis from vocational training (i.e. specific marketable skills) to general and longer term academic training. The women with whom we come in contact wanted to acquire skills which they could put into use quickly in the labour market.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Your Department must take an affirmative action approach to vocational training. Once again this should be done in conjunction with Canada Manpower. Present vocational training for women should be overhauled with an eye to innovative, creative programming, with a priority being training women to hold jobs in the visible, public part of B.C. economy.

The cultural exchange which such an approach would facilitate, would be of great benefit not only to the immigrant family, but more importantly, to Canadian society at large.

Also, your Department must do extensive research into the present demand for the vocational skills in which you set up training programs.

We have recommended vocational training in fields where we believe there is a real need. However, in many of these areas the agency responsible is not filling this need. We do not recommend training people to do useful work, only to let them loose in a market, where no-one will hire them to use their newly acquired skill.

The following programs which we recommend should not be initiated until your Department has made a commitment, and has received commitments from other government departments and community services, that the people being trained by your Department will obtain employment.

1. Specifically, a course should be initiated in family day-care, which would facilitate women in the community providing local, acceptable day-care for other women in their communities. This plan would not only provide an income for the women taking in children, but would free other mothers to earn an often imperative second income.

2. A course should also be established for immigrant women to become Homemakers. Many of these women have raised large families on limited incomes, and they are already experts in the field of home management. They could be called into help the family in which there is sickness, family breakdown etc. This setting would also provide the immigrant woman with a small, informal place in which to learn the language and habits of Canadian families. Canadian families would also greatly benefit from this exchange. However, this area of work does have some associated problems. Family Services must make a commitment to enlarge their present Homemaking Service, so that these women are placed and follow-through from your Department should be done so that exploitation is not allowed to develop in this area.

3. Courses should also be initiated in positions such as teacher's aides, day-care workers, public health workers (especially those attached to mental health teams), library workers etc. to place immigrant women in visible institutions of their communities, where, they can act as mediators between newly

arrived, or troubled children, patients, and clients, and the formal institution, Once again, work in these areas will facilitate cultural exchange, and will force the institutions of the community to more adequately reflect the nature of the community they serve. This project gives top priority to such positions being created in public health units, especially on the mental health teams, and in schools, as these are the places where the highest level of stress and anxiety for new immigrants is to be found. It is therefore, essential that people with such anxiety problems be able to speak to someone who understands their language and their special problems.

4. Your Department must also assume responsibility for community education campaigns around laws and services affecting the newly arrived immigrant. Such work should be carried on in conjunction with the Attorney General's Department.

RC/mm
July 1974.

IMMIGRANT WOMEN IN THE LABOUR FORCE

REPORT TO:

The Honourable William S. King
Minister of Labour

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INTRODUCTION

This project, "Immigrant Women in the Labour Force", gives priority to the problems faced by immigrant women, which come under the jurisdiction of your department. The problems which confront immigrant women in their work place are compounded by their problems with the English Language, vocational training, availability of day care facilities, health services and general cultural alienation and isolation. However, because the majority of time and energy expended by working immigrant women is in their place of work, a resolution of their critical work problems would facilitate improvement in all other areas.

This project defined three problem areas which come under the jurisdiction of your department:

I Lack of enforcement of present statutes under the jurisdiction of the Department of Labour, and constant violation, both in principle and specific, of these statutes.

II Areas which should come under the jurisdiction of the Department of Labour in which there is no existing legislation, or legislation which is so poorly constructed that it is not useful to employers, or it is harmful to employees.

III Lack of information, with no present system for correcting this unawareness on the part of employee and employer alike, with regard to their present work relationship and labour legislation.

SECTION I LACK OF ENFORCEMENT

The problem of lack of enforcement of present labour legislation, and totally inadequate channels for such enforcement, is the most acute in the immigrant working women's life.

We found constant violation of the Factories Act, 1966 (R.S. 1960, c. 136, s. 1); 1966 (c. 14, s. 1), with most of the problems lying in Part I, Division 6, "Health and Safety."

In one garment factory, employing over 80 women, we found that there were only two restrooms for both men and women and no lunchroom facilities for employees. To compound the problem, employees were only permitted to use washrooms during ten minute coffee breaks, so many employees spent their entire coffee break in line for the washroom. This situation directly violated section 24(1), 25(2), and 30(1). (2), (3) of Division 6 of the Factories Act. It also effectively nullified the coffee break.

We also had a number of complaints from the garment, cleaning, and canning and packing workers of problems with dust, irritating chemicals and fibres, poor ventilation, noise, smell, temperature (both too hot and too cold), heavy weights, and unclean and inadequate washroom and lunchroom facilities. All of these complaints were in violation of the principle expressed in Division 6, section 20 and 22 of the Factories Act. Some complaints constituted direct violation of Section 25(4), 26(1-4) and 29 of this Act under your jurisdiction.

There were also specific complaints from workers in one particularly dusty and fibrous garment factory that uniforms were not provided without special request, and at that, the employee was only given the material and had to do the sewing herself. Time was not allowed at the end of the shift to change into one's street clothes, so the last coffee break was used for this purpose. Once again, the coffee break was nullified, and the women had to ruin street clothes during the last hour of work. In this factory there is a high incidence of skin and eye irritation because of the resins and insecticides used on the fabrics. This situation violates the principle of all the sections of the Factory Act which deal with harmful substances, as well as the principle expressed in Minimum Wage Order 3 (1969). Cost and Upkeep of Uniforms, B.C. Regulation, 133/69.

We also found one specific case of a dishwasher who was allergic to the detergent being used in the restaurant. Her doctor prescribed rubber gloves as the only cure for her irritated hands. The employer refused to provide rubber gloves and the cost of providing her own cut so drastically into her minimum wage earnings, that the woman was forced to quit the job, and was therefore not eligible for UIC for some time. This situation also violated the principle expressed in the section of Division 6 of the Factories Act which

deals with harmful substances.

We found two direct violations of the General Minimum Wage Order. Minimum Wage Order 1 (1972), both in the motel industry. Chambermaids were being paid 25¢ below the minimum wage.

We also documented a number of violations of the Order Requiring Employers to Give Their Employees a General Holiday with Pay. B.C. Regulation 200/63, with elaborate systems of lay offs and threats of firing being used to deny employees their statutory holiday pay. In a number of Vancouver garment factories, women were laid off in the week before Christmas and brought back to work after New Years. The factory was closed from December 22-23 to January 2-7. The women were then pressured to work faster and harder before and after the closure to make up for lost time.

In one factory, the women refused to return to work on January 2 because they were not going to get paid for Christmas Day, Boxing Day or New Year's Day. The employer replied that those who wanted to keep their jobs should return to work January 7. Those who had any further complaints could pick up their final cheque and look for employment elsewhere. No general holiday pay was paid until this project intervened, through the Labour Standards Branch.

In another garment factory, women were given Good Friday off without pay. They were then called in to work the following Saturday, at a normal rate of pay. A situation such as this one, which, by law calls for time and a half, is very difficult to document when pay is by piece rate.

In the hotel industry, we discovered that many hotels call all chambermaids on their payrolls in for work each morning. If the hotel is not busy, the chambermaids with the least seniority (often the non-white employees, which raises the question of possible racial discrimination) are sent home with no pay. This is a direct violation of the Daily Guarantee, Section 5(a) of the General Minimum Wage Order.

In the janitorial services industry, especially in the job of office cleaning after regular business hours, we found many cases of entire families working

for two to four hours to do the job, while only being paid as one worker. Families tolerated this situation because the second income was crucial. However, employers in this industry took constant advantage of this dire need, and were able to get the work of two to four individuals for the wages of one. When confronted the employer would respond that the woman was free to bring her children or husband to help her, but the job was actually designed for one person, so he would only pay one wage. It is obvious that the job actually requires more than one worker or this pattern would not be so common. Seen in this light, employers encouraging such practices are violating the General Minimum Wage Order.

In the restaurant industry we found many cases of women not being given official lunch breaks during the day and being forces to "grab a bite" as they work. In these situations there is often no special eating place for employees and food has to be eaten standing, or on the run. This is a violation of the luncheon stipulation the Factory's Act and the Rest Period Order (Minimum Wage Order 11 (1949), B.C. Reg. 132/59).

We directed many of the problems to the Labour Standards Branch of the Department of Labour. Here we were informed that if a written complaint was submitted in English, an investigation would be made. Much to our surprise, we were informed that this branch of your Department was too hard pressed to do routine inspection of most of the garment factories, hotels and restaurants in the Greater Vancouver area, and could only respond to written documented complaints. We realized that some garment factories had, most likely, never been visited by an inspector of yours, or of any other department.

By lodging specific complaints with one employer we were able to improve, though not bring up to standard, the washroom and lunchroom situation in the one factory as described earlier. By lodging written complaints with the Labour Standards Branch, we were able to correct the minimum wage violation in one motel and recoup the loss of general h liday pay for fifty-three women in one garment factory.

These minimal solutions only highlight the everyday reality. If our researchers had not been aware of the laws, been able to read highly technical English, had not been aware of the existence of your Department, had

not been able to write English, had had to face threats of firing or labelling as a trouble maker if complaints were lodged, or pay slips forwarded, and had not set out to investigate these very situations, even these few adjustments would not have been made. No channels were established for dealing with such problems when this project ends nor can this project possibly hope to see, let alone document, the numerous violations reported to it. Further, it is not the responsibility of short term L.I.P. grants to enforce existing legislation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This project insists that the Labour Standards Branch employ an adequate number of full time permanent inspectors to do constant routine inspection in one area of the city, or in a few establishments of the same industry. Such inspectors must be fluent in the major working languages of their area or industry, must visit the establishments as often as necessary to bring them up to Department standards, and must see their job as acquainting themselves with the workers in each establishment and making themselves available, and known, as the ombudsperson for these workers. An attempt should be made to recruit such inspectors from the local ethnic communities they are to serve and people who have worked in the industries they are to inspect should be given priority over those with paper qualifications. If it is necessary to waive the citizenship requirements for civil service in order to meet these stipulations, then the requirement must be waived.

This project would like to stress the importance of such a move immediately in the garment industry. For while problems exist in the canning and packing food servicing and hotel, motel, office cleaning industries, the garment industry is most hidden from the public eye, and reports the highest number of violations.

It must be a clearly stated policy of your department that such inspectors are there to protect and speak for the employees, to the fullest extent present legislation provides, and to pressure for new and improved legislation when the need becomes obvious.

It is needless to say that this recommendation only calls for what should be automatic in any government department; the measures for enforcement of the legislation under the jurisdiction of that department.

SECTION II NO ADEQUATE LEGISLATION

It was unclear and confusing to us for some time, whether or not the Minimum Wage Act applied to pieceworkers. The first improvement that must be made in relation to piecework is that the word "piece rate" must be added to the definition of the Minimum Wage Act.

In the garment industry there are a number of problems associated with piece work. Employers in this industry, make a practice of putting fast workers on an hourly wage and slow workers on piece rate, and thereby creating a high level of tension between workers. A practice is also made of putting new employees on piece rate, and thereby increasing the pressure which is experienced at the beginning of any new job. New employees hired on a piece rate were often laid off in a day or two for being too slow, and in some cases were not paid for the work that they did perform. When questioned about such lay offs, the women often said that they were so nervious about piece work that they were never able to rally and show what they really could do. Both of these uses of piece work as tension elevators have a serious health side effect, as there is a very high occurrence of stomach ulcers among women who work in such situations. In this industry the piece rate has gone down as the Provincial minimum wage goes up. Women are therefore working harder and faster for less money. Women who can find employment elsewhere often leave these jobs quickly. However, this is not an option open to the vast majority of piece workers.

There is also a set of problems associated with piece rate in the janitorial service industry. Women cleaning office buildings are paid by the room. As in the garment industry, in many places the rate per room has gone down as the minimum wage has gone up. Where the rate has not decreased, women have had to clean more rooms in the same time period in order to make up for the raise in minimum wage. Also, there is no standard set for room rate, many women complain that they have to clean rooms with many desks, yet they are paid the same amount as a worker cleaning a room with only one desk. These are the cases where other family members are brought in to help. However, if a woman with help, gets a certain amount of work done, then that amount of work at that pace is set as a standard for a normal work day.

Women in these jobs also complain that they are given the grave responsibility of handling the keys for the building, but are not paid enough to make it worth the worry.

As mentioned earlier, overtime, or general holiday pay at time and a half, are very difficult to estimate for a piece worker as the average rate of pay fluctuates. Overtime, or any situation calling for time and a half, is often denied and the documentation required for a Department of Labour investigator is often impossible to obtain.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This project believes that your Department must draft legislation covering piece work. Such legislation must include stipulations that:

1. Employees must be able to choose hourly or piece rate. This would firmly establish piece work as an incentive program.

2. Minimum wage be guaranteed to all piece workers, and the minimum wage, or its nearest estimated equivalent, be paid to piece workers who contract work to be done at home.

3. That every employer who pays on a piece rate be required to post the rates being paid, with an explanation of how the rate was arrived at, and that such rates should be submitted to your Department for standardization tests, to ensure that the rate is reasonable, given an average working speed.

4. That a list of rates be given to each worker, and that payslips for piece workers itemize the total paycheque by number of items per rate, so that overtime can be computed by the worker.

4. That piece workers be paid by the hour for any time lost due to broken machines, change of items, work interruptions, or anything beyond the control of the employee.

PART-TIME WORKS

It has been unclear to this project, and its legal advisers, what the actual position of part-time workers is in relationship to the law. This is so because your Department does not legally define part-time workers. It was therefore impossible for us to determine whether or not certain workers who are called

part-time or casual by their employers are actually part-time or casual workers, and if such workers were covered by the protection of the Daily Guarantee or Overtime regulations. It is common practice for employers to hire two women on a part-time basis to do one forty hour a week job. If each of these women work twenty-five hours one week, then ten hours of overtime have been worked, yet neither of the women receives any time and a half pay. This pattern of employment, while important because it provides two women with an income, is used also to contravene the intent of other fringe benefits.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This project believes that your department must legally define the terms part-time and casual. Such legislation must include (1) the stipulation that anyone hired on a part-time basis must have an agreed upon number of work hours per day, week, or month, and that overtime be recognized as any number of hours worked in excess of this contract. (2) all other fringe benefits available to full time permanent workers must be available to part-time workers on a prorated basis dependent on the number of contracted hours they work.

ANNUAL AND GENERAL HOLIDAYS ACT

As described earlier there are a number of problems with the interpretation of this Act, especially in regard to the Order Requiring an Employer to Give Employees a General Holiday with Pay. There is a loophole in this act which allows the employer to terminate employment of full-time workers before a general holiday, and to rehire that worker after the holiday, without pay for the holidays falling between the firing and rehiring.

RECOMMENDATION

The Order Requiring Employers to Give Their Employees a General Holiday With Pay must be ammended to include the stipulation that if an employee works fifteen of the preceeding thirty calendar days, she must be paid for a general holiday, whether or not employment has been terminated during those thirty days. Your Department could further protect employees by stipulating this order, that if an employee is fired, but is rehired within 30 days, the employer must pay this employee for all general holidays which occured during the thirty day termination period. Such an ammendment could be important over the Christmas, New Years season.

TERMINATION NOTICE

There were also problems of women whose employment was terminated suddenly, and who were left with no income for the period until new employment was found.

RECOMMENDATION

This project suggests that your Department undertake statutory modification of the notice of termination laws. The precedent now exists for notice of termination, or pay in lieu of notice, for the usual pay period.

SECTION III LACK OF INFORMATION

There are two areas in which lack of information on the part of employees (and in some cases employers) allows the two preceeding problem areas to continue. On a long term basis, this is the most fundamental area of concern.

LACK OF INFORMATION ON ACTUAL JOB AGREEMENT

Many women we spoke to were unable to give us the actual name of their employer, were unaware of exactly how much they were making an hour, of any possible fringe benefits, holiday pay, the nature of meaning of U.I.C., Canada Pension, and Tax deductions, the terms of termination of employment, the terms of in-service training, or any special orders of your Department which pertain to their job. One cannot underestimate how this lack of vital information makes it impossible for a worker to analize the work situation.

RECOMMENDATION

This project suggests that your Department make it law that every employer is responsible for providing a written contract of specification of working conditions to every new employee. Such a contract should include:

Job Description
Wage and overtime remuneration
Fringe benefits
Employment insurance terms
Terms of in-service training
Maternity leave
Terms of termination of employment
Pension Plans

Holidays
Special orders pertaining to the industry of work place
Uniform regulations

Such a contract should also include the provincial minimum wage requirements, and (please refer to report to the Department of Human Resources) day care and community service information. These conditions of employment should be translated into the language spoken by the employee and must be signed by both employer and employee. This contract should have no connection with the immigration proceedings of any worker, and is in no way seen as a "work contract" for such a purpose.

(N.B. this recommendation parallels, and draws on the wording of the YWCA's report of the position of immigrant women in Canada in general).

LACK OF INFORMATION ABOUT LABOUR LEGISLATION

It is very clear that there is a grave problem because of the lack of information of their rights on the side of employees and lack of information of their obligations on the part of employers. This lack of information is compounded by two problems, the first is the seeming indifference of your Department in regard to education around your legislation, the second is the cumbersome scattered, and disjointed way in which such information is presently available to the interested individual or group.

The first problem, the seeming indifference of your Department, was clearly shown to this project during its own work. In our research, most of the women we met were totally unaware that there were any laws designed for their protection, or that there was a Department responsible for enforcing such laws. The project therefore early on, became concerned with the problem of education about labour laws. We were specifically concerned with the new minimum wage effective June 3, as most of the women we contacted stood to gain from the new order. When we contacted your Department, through the Labour Standards Branch, to ask what education program they had planned, we were informed that an advertisement might be placed in the provincial presses, but that beyond such a move, nothing was planned. We then contacted the Women's Bureau with the suggestion of sending a letter to garment and hotel employers (we were prepared to help provide lists) about the new order. The Womens Bureau suggested that such a job was more appropriate for the Minister. We then wrote you with the same suggestion, and

after two weeks received a letter thanking us for our concern and sending us a copy of the ad placed in the provincial press.

We were very disappointed with the size of the ad., especially when we compared it to the size and noticeability of ads placed in the papers by other branches of the government (specifically, the ads re ICBC extension of driver certificate deadline). Your small advertisement bore no resemblance to the catchy nature of other ads, and was so unnoticeable that those of us working on the project who had kept an eye to the paper for any such advertisement, failed to notice it. We were also very disappointed with your statement that it was too difficult to keep up-to-date lists of employers in the province and that when a mailing campaign had been undertaken at other times, many letters were returned to you. It seems that even if this high rate of return resulted, it would be a small cost compared to the difference of a higher rate for the lowest paid sector of B.C. economy. It also surprised us that up-to-date lists could not be kept of employing establishments, as the Canadian census and the various licensing branches of government are established to keep tabs on this very information.

Faced with what can only be labelled, totally inadequate educational emphasis by your Department we set out to provide some educational information ourselves. Then began a long process of rounding up all the various statutes, constantly checking all new gazettes for any changes or special orders in relationship to the laws, and translation of the laws into lay English and then lay Chinese, Portuguese, Italian, Greek, Hindi, Punjabi etc. We did manage to disseminate information in these communities about the new Minimum Wage Order through Multilingual Social Service, ethnic presses and ethnic radio programs on CJVB.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This project believes that there must be a general overhaul of all legislation under the jurisdiction of the Department of Labour, with the intent of formulating one piece of legislation for all areas under the jurisdiction of the Labour Standards Branch.

This piece of legislation must be available in lay language in all the

major working languages of the province, and must be posted in the major working languages of any working establishment.

The public notice of orders, presently done through disjointed, technical gazetting must be revamped, and employers or establishments to whom such orders pertain must be required to post them, immediately upon implementation in all major working languages in the work place. Employees must also be given copies of any such orders upon request.

Your Department must, with the help of the census, the Licensing Department or the Taxation Department if necessary keep up-to-date lists of all employing establishments to whom labour legislation pertains.

Your Department must make funds and staff available for extensive media campaigns about existing and new legislation under your jurisdiction. Advertising must be done in a number of languages in the ethnic presses and radio programs throughout the province.

Your Department must also establish a program of films, tapes and speakers who will routinely visit working establishments employing ten or more employees (that is without special request), for the purpose of education regarding labour laws. This service must also be available to establishments of ten or fewer employees on request from any one of the employees. Every employer must make one hour every six months, without loss of pay to the employees, available for such a program for workers and management alike. This is particularly important in ethnic communities where many women do not read their own language.

CONCLUSION

It is needless to say that this project is most concerned that these situations, and recommendations for improvement be acted upon immediately and in a sincere, committed way by your Department. It is necessary that a thought out integrated campaign to improve the position of immigrant women in the B.C. Labour Force be undertaken on a long term basis with provision for constant assessment of the success and failure of such a campaign.

RC/mm
July 1974.

IMMIGRANT WOMEN IN THE LABOUR FORCE

REPORT TO:

CANADA MANPOWER

IMMIGRANT WOMEN IN THE LABOUR FORCE

REPORT TO:

CANADA MANPOWER

This project "Immigrant Women in the Labour Force' documented 2 problem areas concerning immigrant working women as they are affected by Canada Manpower policy.

The first problem area exists in the present Language Training Manpower course offered at Vancouver City College in conjunction with the Special Programs Division of Vancouver City College. The second problem area exists in the treatment that immigrant women receive when they report to Canada Manpower offices, especially with regard to their lack of "Canadian experience".

1. Language Training - Manpower

This course, which is sponsored by your Department as a pre-employment course, accepts only 220 students a term, so that not everyone who applies for the course can be sponsored. There is a two to three month waiting list for this program. Because of this overflow, priorities are set by your Department as to who should be sponsored, and although this project is unable to get any official information about priority criteria, it was unofficially acknowledged by those we spoke to that those applicants who have the highest chance of receiving employment after the course are given higher priority. We were also told, again unofficially, and with conflicting evidence, that Manpower would not sponsor both a husband and wife in this language program. The result of this selection process of applicants is that women, who are usually unskilled, or have low paying job skills, and are not the chief breadwinner of the family, are not usually sponsored. Women therefore remain in low paying jobs because they cannot acquire the language skills necessary to get better paying jobs.

Even if a woman is admitted to the course, the small living stipend which your Department pays her is not enough, and does not replace even a minimum wage income. Women admitted to this course have also experienced difficulty getting their children into the King Edward Campus day care.

The relatively few places available creates problems of a different sort; problems which deal with the quality of language training being provided. Women

who were sent from this project to apply for sponsorship were not admitted because it was assessed that they spoke "fluent broken English". Those women who have, out of necessity acquired enough English to be able to understand very simple questions, and to respond in a way which a trained language teacher can understand, are penalized. Their "fluent broken English" is not good enough for employment, yet it is too good to get them sponsorship in the course.

Women who have been admitted to the class complain of a very low learning efficiency. Although they spend six hours a day at classes, they do not really learn the language at all. This low learning efficiency is blamed on the fact that people from a large number of language backgrounds are put in the same class, so language training cannot be bilingual (from the mother tongue to the second language). Low learning efficiency also results because the content of the course is often irrelevant to the immediate needs of the students.

RECOMMENDATIONS

First, more spaces be provided in the course so that women can be admitted without displacement in the course, so that the waiting list can be discontinued, and so that people, who by absolute necessity have acquired a smattering of the language will not be penalized for this knowledge.

Second, along with this change is size. It must become official policy that women be admitted in equal proportion as they apply and with equal consideration as men.

Third, the living stipend must be raised to a living wage, at least minimum wage.

Fourth, free day care must be provided for the children of parents in the course, and this day care must be provided on campus. As students are not paid for days they do not attend, home care must be provided for sick children who cannot attend day care.

Fifth, Canada Manpower must assess the learning efficiency of this class with a look towards bilingual education (from one language to English).

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Sixth, as suggested in the YWCA's report on the general position of Immigrant Women in Canada, Canada Manpower must consider language classes held at the place of work, a viable and necessary form of language training. Canada Manpower must provide incentives for employers to make available, in conjunction with Unions where they exist, language classes at the work place. Programs established in Manitoba on this model reported a higher learning efficiency, as the language training was work related. This project therefore suggests a pilot project of this sort to be established by Manpower, with Manpower teachers. (It is important that first line supervisors are not the language teachers, as this will make the language classes too much a part of the authority structures of the job and may seriously impede learning).

Seventh, while this is not specifically related to language training, Canada Manpower along with the provincial Department of Education must take an affirmative action approach in regard to its vocational training and retraining programs. The choices now available to immigrant women are very limited. (For further elaboration of this point please see the report to the Department of Education).

2. Many women report that when they go to a Canada Manpower office for assistance in finding work they cannot talk to the counsellors because of the language barrier. This language barrier often results in an incorrect evaluation of the woman's skill, and placement in a low paying job category. This project also found many cases in which women could not be placed because of lack of "Canadian experience". However, as the YWCA's National Report on the Position of Immigrant Women in Canada points out: "discrimination in employment and job promotion is often hidden behind the phrase: "lack of Canadian experience".

RECOMMENDATIONS

We congratulate the beginning Canada Manpower has made through Outreach Program and special Community Training programs. We recommend that these be extended by:

1. Canada Manpower employing a number of people to span the major first languages in any community. Such counsellors must become acquainted with employers in the community who will hire people who do not have language skills. The language ability of these employees must be recognized as a job-related skill, and remunerated as would any other special skill.

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2. Lack of Canadian experience is inevitable for an immigrant who has recently arrived in Canada. This is therefore a redundant and discriminatory label, and should be abandoned altogether.

RC/pb
July 1974

IMMIGRANT WOMEN IN THE LABOUR FORCE

REPORT TO:

The Honourable Dennis Cocke
Minister of Health

IMMIGRANT WOMEN IN THE LABOUR FORCE

REPORT TO:

The Honourable Dennis Cocke
Minister of Health

This project, "Immigrant Women in the Labour Force" would like to draw your attention to Part two of the report to the Minister of Human Resources - Lack of Useful Support Services. We are aware that many of the problems documented in this section, as well as the recommendations made come under the jurisdiction of your Department i.e. all mental health care facilities.

We have included this aspect of our research with the problems of social services in general (jurisdiction of the Department of Human Resources) because we see the need for a combined approach in meeting the health and welfare needs of immigrant women in the labour force.

This project has also documented a number of specific health problems of immigrant women in the labour force. The first area of concern was the skin and respiratory irritations afflicting women who work in dusty, fibrous garment factories, and with chemical cleaning agents in cleaning and dishwashing jobs.

Our report to the Department of Labour documents a number of these complaints and we again would like to draw these particular aspects of that report to your attention.

The second major health problem we found is directly related to Part two of the report to the Department of Human Resources. We found an unusually frequent occurrence of ulcers and other internal disorders caused by anxiety among immigrant working women. This health problem was particularly high among women on piecework and seemed to occur most frequently in the Portuguese community. These cases are documented in the report to the Department of Labour. Your special attention should be given these sections also. We must stipulate that we give top priority to the problems with mental health care.

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Both of these areas highlight the need for the changes we recommend to the Department of Labour specifically in terms of inspection of factories and enforcement of present legislation. We recommend that your Department accompany the Department of Labour on such inspection and bring to bear pressure on your government to make the workplace a healthy safe place for workers.

RC/pb
July 1974

IMMIGRANT WOMEN IN THE LABOUR FORCE

REPORT TO:

The Honourable Norman Levi
Minister of Human Resources

IMMIGRANT WOMEN IN THE LABOUR FORCE

REPORT TO:

The Honourable Norman Levi
Minister of Human Resources

This project "Immigrant Women in the Labour Force" has documented a number of problems which come under the jurisdiction of your Department. The wasted and destroyed human resource of immigrant women coming to Canada is of utmost concern to those of us who have worked in this area, and must become of utmost concern to your Department. The first and most specific is the entire area of day care. The second, more general, yet equally important area is the whole lack of useful services, especially in relation to mental health and family counselling.

Day Care

Because this project was basically concerned with working women, the problem of day care was one of the first raised by these women. Most women who we contacted were totally unaware that the province provided subsidized day care for families with low incomes. Those who were aware of such a program did not make use of it because they could not communicate with those running the centres, and felt that their children would not receive the care which was harmonious with the cultural values of the family. Of all the women spoken to ONLY FIVE made use of subsidy programs in day care centres.

Most working women hired babysitters from their communities, or had their family members, usually grandparents living in the house, take care of the children. These women were not aware that the grandparents could receive a small subsidy for this work. Nor were women hiring babysitters aware that they could deduct this cost from their taxes. Others who were aware of this new deduction complained that the number of babysitters had declined, since it no longer paid women to babysit if they had to declare the small income.

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Women who were informed, through this project of the help supposedly available through your Department, and who were encouraged to apply for subsidies for family or in-home day care, or placement in a centre, became involved in a two or three month ordeal with repeated bureaucratic demands of forms, letters etc. This procedure required the constant use of interpreters from this project.

We on the project experienced difficulty getting up-to-date information on new day care legislation. Rules for in-home or family day care, subsidy plans, and space open in centres. When the Vancouver Day Care Information Centre was approached for such information, they could not provide an up-to-date handbook nor an up-to-date copy of the covering legislation. The new legislation, which was to go into effect on June 1st, had not been forwarded to them on May 30th

The result of this confusing day care situation is that many women are spending a large proportion of their small income on childcare. At times, they have had to leave work altogether because of the lack of childcare services available or known to them.

RECOMMENDATIONS

a. Your Department must make available, in all the major languages spoken in the province, an information packet containing:

- a description of all the various types of day care and subsidy schemes available under each
- lay interpretation of the day care legislation
- instructions for completing the necessary forms, and the name and location of interpreters if one is required
- a list of all centres in the Greater Vancouver area
- a description of the parent-board day care organization, with a sample constitution
- names of provincial organizers to call if wishing to set up a parent-board day care centre

b. Your Department must make it a requirement of employers hiring women with children (or single fathers), that the employer provide this information packet in language of origin of the worker upon his or her entry onto the payroll. This project has recommended to the Department of Labour that a contract of working

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conditions be required between every employer and employee upon entry into the labour force, and has recommended that this day care information be one of the items about which the employer must provide information. Dissemination could therefore be a joint venture of your Department and the Department of Labour.

c. As well as providing information about existing day care facilities your Department must immediately initiate organization of day care centres in the industrial areas of Vancouver, specifically for the use of the women working in those areas. Such centres should be organized and staffed by people recruited from the major ethnic communities working in the neighbourhood, so that parents can communicate with the staff, and so that the day care provided can be acceptable to members of different ethnic communities.

d. Your Department, in conjunction with the Department of Education, must facilitate training and licensing of women in different ethnic communities to provide family day care in their homes, especially for under two care. As was suggested to the Department of Education, such a plan will allow two families (the family of the women taking in children, as well as the mother freed to work) with greater incomes, while providing local, informal and harmonious care.

Lack of Useful Support Services

There are a number of problems faced by women coming into Canada from distinct cultures, especially in regard to the different roles of mother, wife and family in Canadian society. The YWCA's National Report on the position of immigrant women in Canada lists the crucial problems of the unaccompanied immigrant woman as:

1. Language
2. Loneliness
3. Employment
4. Accommodation
5. Different social and cultural mores
6. Fear of bodies of authority
7. Racial discrimination where applicable
8. Lack of nursery care for under twos
9. Lake of knowledge and understanding of public services available (Federal, provincial, municipal and voluntary services)

This project has found these problems common among unaccompanied, as well as married immigrant women. Many of these problems are evident in other reports from this

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project, as well as the description of child care problems in this report.

In specific regard to single women, there are particular problems with point 5 "different cultural and social mores" for adolescent girls. As the YWCA's report says:

> "For the adolescent girl who comes to Canada with her family there exists frequently real or potential conflict between the cultural behavior of her family and that of her peer group in Canadian society. Some immigrant families (and Canadian as well) still regard the education of boys more important than that of girls. Customs in regard to dating and sexual behavior in general differ sharply, physical punishment inflicted on these girls for contravening behavior is not rare..."

This project, while concerned predominantly with working women, includes this assessment because it summarizes very well, a number of situations we have encountered.

The different social and cultural mores also produce special problems for mature women. A large percentage of immigrant families are living at subsistence or below subsistence levels. This makes the need for the wife's income imperative, yet the cultural values make it a source of family tension if the wife is employed outside the home and therefore, outside her traditional role in society.

As the YWCA's report points out again, in line with our finding "the immigrant wife and mother is often the buffer between her husband's and children's frustrations to come to terms with new life". As the immigrant wife and mother is often the last member of the family to learn English, she is left isolated from this new life, and estranged from her children and often her husband. Again, as the YWCA's report says:

> "Where communication between husband and wife tends to be non-verbal, her (womans) emotional state is still more confused; she cannot understand her husband, she dare not rebel for fear of being even more lonely and her children enter into associations foreign to her:.

Because of the limited knowledge of the language, these women are not able to test their skills in the new society, and cannot communicate on behalf of their children or themselves in the school and general community. Her position in her family is therefore weakened, and she is isolated from many areas in which she could gain confidence.

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> "She assumes that her way of life is inferior to that of Canadian society and she has too little knowledge of the language to test the correctness of her assumptions. As her children begin to integrate into their school activities she experiences a sense of loss here, too. A sense of "being left behind" develops in being no longer relevant in her accustomed values and position of centrality in the family.
>
> These barriers to her personal growth put her physically and emotionally in a situation where she cannot be reached by ideas about women's rights. Indeed they are frightening to her. The rate of nervous breakdowns of immigrant women is high in Canada and yet relatively undetected because these women are isolated. The cases which do come to public attention can hardly be dealt with adequately since the norms of mental and emotional stability in Canadian society rest on different assumptions. If her ability to speak English is poor her prospects of being adequately treated are slim".

The above quote is also taken from the YWCA's National Report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

a. It is imperative that your Department give special consideration to the problems of immigrant women, specifically by providing your staff with a good working background and understanding of the cultural orientation and the specific problems of adaptation they are likely to face in the communities in which they are located.

b. Community Mental Health Teams must be instructed to take the initiative in locating the isolated woman in need of help and establishing programs which can really help her. As was suggested in the report to the Department of Education, the small group language classes established under the LIP funded Community Education Project form a good base for group programs in general. In order that any services established by Community Mental Health Teams are useful, such teams should include people from the ethnic communities. Our report to the Department of Education suggests the establishment of programs to train immigrant women to work on mental health teams. However, the working knowledge of language and culture, presently held by untrained immigrant women is as essential an element of effective mental health care, as is any skill presently represented on mental health teams.

c. Towards these ends, this project recommends that a workshop type training program be established for the staff of the Department of Human Resources in which indigenous community organizers can train professionals in the particular cultural orientation necessary for family counselling.

July 1974

IMMIGRANT WOMEN IN THE LABOUR FORCE

REPORT TO:

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE COMMISSION

IMMIGRANT WOMEN IN THE LABOUR FORCE

REPORT TO:

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE COMMISSION

This project "Immigrant Women in the Labour Force" has documented a number of problems of immigrant working women because the Unemployment Insurance Commission does not recognize language problems as a legitimate barrier in terms of:

1. Dealings with the Commission itself.
2. Active job search requirements.

1. Dealings with the Commission

A number of women have been unable to attend interviews with their U.I.C. counsellors because they could not bring their own interpreter at the designated hour. Because of their inability to keep these appointments, women have been denied further U.I.C. benefits.

RECOMMENDATIONS

a. On a short-term basis, U.I.C. must make appointments with people who need to bring an interpreter at a convenient time for the interpreter. As this interpreter is often a school aged child, or another working member of the family, U.I.C. must be flexible in terms of normal office hours.

b. Where a claimant cannot provide an interpreter, U.I.C. should make use of community interpretor services (Multilingual Social Service in Greater Vancouver

c. On a long term basis, U.I.C. must hire counsellors to span a number of languages and cultures, so that immigrants will be able to deal with a counsellor who speaks their language and understands their particular problems.

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2. Active Job Search Requirements

There are a limited number of places in which a woman who does not speak English can apply for work and can be employed. Her language barrier limits her possibilities, compared with workers in the same occupational area who do speak English.

Women who do not speak, let alone read or write English, have difficulty keeping their own records, or completing available English forms, requiring specific information about the name and address of places where they applied for work and what happened to the job. Often immigrant women looking for work only know what bus they take to the prospective employer, or what friend or relative also works there.

RECOMMENDATIONS

a. The Unemployment Insurance Commission must recognize language barriers as a legitimate job restriction and must therefore set a reasonable job search requirement which takes account of this problem.

b. The Commission must provide forms in a number of languages for women who are literate in languages other than English. For those who are not literate in any language, U.I.C. must allow job search information to be recorded in a number of flexible ways. This project resents the over policing and general mistrust of people's efforts to find suitable work.

RC/pb
July 1974